

RECEIVED

June 17, 2024

Clerk of Court  
United States District Court  
402 E. State Street  
Trenton, NJ 06608

JUN 17 2024  
AT 8:30 M  
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT - DNJ

Case Number 22-CR-621  
United States of America v. Katherine Peterson

Subject-Request for Legal Furlough for testimony at trial starting June 24, 2024

Dear Judge Michael A Shipp,

Thank you for your time. Rami Lazeki(BOP number 57831-039) and I(James Letko BOP number 57832-039) were subpoenaed to testify in person at this trial and we both were in BOP custody at the time. The subpoena is enclosed. I was at Lewisburg Federal Prison Camp in Lewisburg, PA and Rami was at Gilmer Federal Prison camp in Glenville, WV. We both requested legal furloughs through our attorneys to attend the trial to make things easier for us along with making it easier for the government. This would have allowed us both to miss less First Step Act(FSA) programming and for me to miss less of my CDL class at the camp. We were both on pretrial release for over four years and are a low risk with no disciplinary action at the BOP. US attorney Shankar Ramamurthy denied our request saying furloughs are rare and only used for funerals. This is not the case and according to BOP policy 5280.09. In the policy under section 3. Types of Furloughs there are overnight furloughs where the length is 3 to 7 calendar days. One type of this overnight furlough is section f. Legal Furlough- A legal furlough is defined as a day or overnight furlough used primarily for purposes listed in Section 4(f)-(h). Section h says Appear in or prepare for a criminal court proceeding , but only when the use of a furlough is requested or recommended by the applicable court or prosecuting attorney. I was told by inmates that were transferred from Otisville FPC in NY to Lewisburg FPC in PA for the RDAP program that Otisville allows a 15 hour furlough after being at the camp for six months. That furlough is for the purpose of going home to visit with family and the second time you can get a 48 hour furlough.

With the request denied we were required to travel via the US Marshall Service. One June 12, 2024 which was Rami's fifteenth day of travel and my first day of travel we met at Stewart airport and finished our travel together in a van to Essex County Correctional Facility in Newark,NJ. That afternoon we were processed and while in the first and second holding rooms we heard code announcements over the loudspeaker and witnessed several groups of Correctional Officers(CO) in face shield, protective vests and weapons rushing up and down the hallways. In our second holding room we were mixed with the county defendants. Then we were told our TB scans which did not require quarantine at the camps which were done 7 months ago for me and 5 months ago for Rami were not valid. Their policy was a new screen if the test was longer than ninety days and required us to quarantine. Wednesday night we were brought

mattresses and told to sleep on the floor since quarantine was full. That night at 1:30 we received our PPD test. Finally at 4pm on Thursday afternoon we were escorted to our cells in the quarantine pod which is a mixed pod with the vast majority of them from the county. County inmates are in orange jumpsuits and federal inmates are in yellow. We were not allowed showers or calls on Thursday. Friday afternoon we were let out of our cells for one hour. We were each in different cells with county defendants. My cellmate shared with me stories of him being in and out of prison for violent crimes and getting into fights. It is common for defendants in this pod to constantly bang, argue and scream at one another throughout the day. When I asked about a book cart the officer only had one version of a Bible that I was not interested in. On Friday night we received our TB reads which were negative. Saturday morning at 8am we were let out again for one hour. When we asked the Officer when we could expect to leave this area for the general population she said two to three days since the prison is at capacity. The CO said the government stopped the contract for the separate federal area so the federal prisoners are put in a regular prison pod area which is also at capacity so she said we would likely be sent to a mixed pod with federal and county inmates. The CO also said the facility has been on and off lockdown recently.

Sunday we were not let out of our cell at all, so we had no access to phones or showers, due to staff shortages for Father's Day. We had the same amount of CO's in our pod(2) so I assumed they were short of backup CO's who dress in gear to break up fights like the ones we saw on Wednesday. They likely kept the whole prison locked down yesterday, which was Father's Day. Also, Rami's camp used brown boxers and undershirts and here they use white so his brown ones were taken away and he was only provided with one pair of underwear so he does not have a change of underwear. Rami also takes 3 prescription medications that were misplaced in the transfer facility in OK. He has not had his medications in days. He did have two doses of one medication, but has not had his prescription medication for depression and as a pharmacist he knows how detrimental that can be to stop that prescription abruptly.

We do not feel safe. Being at this level of a facility (medium security county prison) with no access to books or tablets is taking a toll on both of our mental health. Therefore, we are requesting you to consider an expedited legal furlough. My wife, Patricia Letko, lives at our home address which is 11 Duke Ct Pittstown, NJ 08867. This address is 50 miles and 55 minutes from Essex County Correctional Facility in Newark, NJ and 30 miles and 50 minutes away from the Federal CourtHouse in Trenton, NJ. She is available to pick me up and take me home from here, to take me to the trial and take me back to Lewisburg Prison Camp after the trial. She visits me at the camp every weekend that they offer visitation. If you are interested in approving this request or have questions please contact my attorney George Donnini. For Rami please contact his attorney James Burdick. I apologize for this direct request, but I wasn't sure what else to do. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

*Patricia Letko (POA for James Letko)*

James Letko

cc Shankar Ramamurthy, [Shankar.Ramamurthy@usdoj.gov](mailto:Shankar.Ramamurthy@usdoj.gov)

George Donnini, [Donnini@butzel.com](mailto:Donnini@butzel.com)

James Burdick, [jwb@burdickpc.com](mailto:jwb@burdickpc.com)